

Reach out in the darkness

The Great Blackout(s)

by Michele Fabrizio

Wednesday night, September 30, 7:15 p.m. Drew University. A typical night. Somewhere on campus, a student was settling down to study long-over due assignments; two coeds were heaving crepe paper all around a room in preparation for a birthday celebration; four guys bathed in sweat were drooling over a hot game of poker; some kid was rummaging through the library stacks in search of spicy reading material; an undernourished Drewite was pacing the floor, awaiting the arrival of a care package via parents. Yes, folks, the Drew community was just shuffling along at its usual tempo, minding their own business--and totally unaware of terror that would befall us all. That's right, gang, as Drew played, the good old fuses in Embury Hall were literally rotting. Then suddenly, at 7:16, Drew blacked itself out.

The third big Dark in eight days, the blackout came quietly and frightened the toenails off more than a few people. I, for one was really shook. My roommate and I had decided to give our studies a big break that night. It was just around 7:15 when we whipped out a few books and settled down to work. I had opened my Norton's Anthology of English Literature when I went blind.

"Aaaah! I can't see! It's an omen from God! I really shouldn't study so hard! Why did we start this stuff to-night? Whose idea was it anyway?"

"Shaddup. I can't see either. Where the hell's the door?"

"I dunno. Wait a minute" (After tripping over a chair, I got up and groped for the door.) "Got it!" (I got the closet.) "No, wait a minute. Got it!" (This time I did.)

Once out in the hall, our vision was aided by the emergency power lights at the end of each hall. Everyone who was in the dorm had rushed into the hall to see what had passed. In the usual Drew tradition, no one knew anything. Someone said something about it being along the entire Eastern coast; others said it was only on campus.

"Maybe Drew didn't pay the bill."

"For \$3500 they had damn well better."

A dedicated few brought books and other paraphernalia into the hall in order to study by the little light from the emergency power. After ten minutes of eyestrain and concentration, the consensus was to bag the homework in favor of "who's got some cards?"

Although lighted candles in the dorms are subject to \$50 fines, anyone who

had the wicked wax lit 'em up. Eventually, a heated game of Spit by Candlelight got underway only to be witnessed by the housemother. Twenty faces grinned broadly, revealing successful orthodontry. The housemother knew why. "Don't worry about the candles. I left three of them burning in my apartment. I can't see a thing without them!"

Meanwhile, over in the suites, a tense poker game was coming to its grand finale. One guy in particular was having a fantastic losing streak. The game wasn't quite over and already he was out \$1.37.

As the tension mounted, the smoke curled into the lamp and sweat from nervous fingers dribbled down the cards. The loser saw that he was doomed. "Oh, God, help," he muttered offhandedly. He was prepared for defeat and poised to throw his hand down when--total black. The kid was stunned. He rose and staggered out of the dark suite into the grand inky black of the campus, in search of Chaplain Boyd. It has been reported that this kid is still sitting in the chapel, waiting for further manifestations of his Calling.

While the suites were taking full advantage of the perfect opportunity to indulge in a little whoopee, the starving Drew coed anxiously awaited her parents and the food. Then, like a great shot of hot air, the lounge door burst opened, and Mother fell through.

"WHERE ARE YOU?"

"Over here."

"OH MY GOD WHAT HAPPENED? The whole place is BLACK! What happened? Are you all right? Here's the food. I told your father we should have come earlier. . . What the hell happened? Is it like this all over? Probably not. Just on this lousy campus. . . Here's the food. . . Are you sure you're alright?"

"Thanks for the food and yeah, I'm o.k. See ya."

"Listen, whaddya mean 'see ya'? I'M NOT LEAVING YOU HERE."

"Why not?"

"Because why the hell should I? We're paying \$3500 a year for you to go here and THEY DON'T EVEN HAVE LIGHTS! I mean how can I leave you here in the dark?"

"It's o.k., I'm tellin' ya. It happens all the time here. No big deal, really."

Mother was finally convinced that Drew's Blackouts, like Drew's Bomb-scars are just little things that kind of go along with Autumn in the Forest. In fact, dear MOM was told, she shouldn't complain about getting her dollar's worth. Just think of all these extra-added social-

type events that are included in the \$3500. "So you see Mom, it's really a bargain!"

Elsewhere on campus, a little panic rose up. The library, for instance, was a total disaster area; people in the stacks had to sit tight for an hour and fifteen minutes. WERD's disc jockey talked for seven minutes after the power went out, just in case "somebody was still getting us." SAGA should have panicked; after all the food could have gone bad. However, SAGA didn't and the food did. (This last development is, alas, nothing new.)

The cause of the power failure was actually due to the recent heat wave and resulting electrical overload. The fuses were in bad shape and had been since the first blackout. At that time, Drew changed its fuses and requested that Madison Borough check theirs that serviced Drew. But Madison delayed its action and thus, the Wednesday Night Wipe Out. According to Mr. Gipe, Assistant Director of the Plant Office, everything is now under control.

In spite of this information, there do exist sceptics. One in particular, a very special person named Peter, felt that the failure was not all that simple. I mean, he didn't order the Great Darkness, and if he didn't who did? As a routine check, just to make sure he was still his good old self, Peter filled his bathtub with water and proceeded to walk across.

Afterwards, Peter sat on the edge of the tub. "Well, the problem does not lie with me; I'm fine." And Peter felt better, knowing it was only the fuses that befuddled him.

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in for the Madison police and did the best job of policing the show that we have yet seen at Drew. My many helpers in preparing and presenting the show included Thom Newcomb, Rich Tait and Don Orlando, and I appreciate their help, as well as that of others.

The concert was a financial success, the third in a row to pay for itself without spending a dime of Social Committee funds. I feel that this is the best evidence that we here at Drew can continue to offer the best concerts of the area colleges, large and small.

David Marsden
Concert Chairman